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ISSN:2582-7375

LITERARIA

An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities

Volume 5 Issue 2

Aug - Sept, 2024

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NEW LITERARIA

CONTENT

August-September 2024

Sl. No.	Name of the Contributors	Articles	Page No.
1.	Ramit Das	Playing the Pirate, Playing the Jew: Refiguring the Other(s) on the Early Modern English Stage	01-09
2.	Sadia Afreen	The Complexities of Transnational Identity and Nazneen's Concept of Agency in Monica Ali's <i>Brick Lane</i>	10-18
3.	Li Chunyi	Metaphors and the Integration of Faith and Reason in Ang Lee's <i>Life of Pi</i>	19-25
4.	Manjari Johri	Examining the Impact of Cinema on the Normalization of Queer and Sexual Minorities Through Kundalkar's <i>Cobalt Blue</i>	26-36
5.	J.R. Sackett	The Celtic Other in the Regionalist Poems of John Hewitt	37-46
6.	Partha Sarathi Mondal	'Dalit Aesthetics' through Poetic Rendering of Experience: A Study on Bengali Dalit Poetry	47-56
7.	Tapas Sarkar	Re-writing History and Myth as Re-creating Identities: A Study of Jibanananda Das's Narrative Technique	57-63
8.	Alankrita Bhattacharya	The Post-millennial Dalit Woman in Documentary: Traversing the Journey from Abasement to Agency in the Documentary <i>Daughters of Destiny</i> (2017)	64-73
9.	Kavya Nair K.S	Navigating Adolescent Liminality: A Critical Exploration of the Threshold Experiences in Abha Dawesar's <i>Babyji</i>	74-81
10.	Adithya P and Lal Surya S	Shape of Water: A Critical Analysis of Transcorporeal Existence in the Movie <i>Aavasavyuham</i>	82-89
11.	Aditi Bandyopadhyay	"Dead Paper": A Study of the Trauma of Therapeutic Fallacy in Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper"	90-98
12.	Mujaffar Hossain	Femininity Through the Lens: Narrating Sexual Politics and Women's Emancipation in <i>Parched</i> and <i>Lipstick Under my Burkha</i>	99-103
13.	Srestha Bhattacharya	Affect, Subjectivity and Everyday Resistance in Hasan Azizul Haque's <i>The Bird of Fire</i>	104-112
14.	Sahabuddin Ahamed	History and Narrative: A Postmodern Scrutiny of Salman Rushdie's <i>Midnight's Children</i>	113-121
15.	Shivani Rana & Dr. Anupriya Roy Srivastava	Unveiling Trauma in the Life Narrative of Transgender: A Study of Manobi Bandhopadhyay's <i>A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi</i>	122-128

16.	Abhinandan Bag	Ghosts of Yesterday: Exploring the Intersections of Memory and Trauma in select children's writings of Sudha Murty	129-140
		Book Review	
17.	Pragya Goswami	<i>Anger in the Long Nineteenth Century: Critical Perspectives:</i> Edited by Ritushree Sengupta and Shouvik Narayan Hore	R01-R03
		Translation	
18.	Albrecht Classen	<i>Der Stricker, Der Pfaffe Amîs – The Priest Amîs</i>	T01-T33

**Book Review**

Anger in the Long Nineteenth Century: Critical Perspectives: Edited by
Ritushree Sengupta and Shouvik Narayan Hore

Pragya Goswami

Publisher: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Language: English

ISBN (10): 1-5275-2922-3

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-2922-9

In his Introduction, Hore begins by deconstructing Tennyson's *Locksley Hall*, dissecting the element of anger through the lines. As the poet speaker reminisces about his past, he is enclosed by the pangs of anger; his anger is concrete; he blasts his cousin Amy with anger-induced vocabulary calling her "shallow hearted" (ix). We find the transition of argumentative envy into retributive anger (x). The poet-speaker mercilessly drags his cousin from the anthropological to the anthropomorphized domain with the usage of equine and canine metaphors. The speaker's "legitimate anger" (xi) is reflected into layers with his exasperation about the perpetually delayed gratification in the transient world. The author states that the verbal attack and the mis-definitions arise from the unconscious. Roger Ebbatson defines the truest form of legitimate anger in *Locksley Hall* as "millenarian apocalypse" (xii), belated realization of the anti-apocalyptic drives in Nineteenth-century England.

In the second chapter, Roskams provides us with a comprehensive study of anger in the nineteenth century composer's life; she defines Beethoven's anger as foundational giving rise to tempestuous creativity. She showcases anger through handpicked fictional composers from E.T.A Hoffmann's Kreisler, Carl Maria von Weber, Hector Berlioz, to Bernard Shaw's Owen Jack. Roskam further divides the fictionalized composer's anger into four categories, the first one being the "Romantic stereotypes" (4), where the dualism between tenderness and turbulence is shown in the composer. The composer's anger is symbolic of their tempestuous works. This vague yearning towards the shadowing distance and consciousness of a high ideal as per Hoffmann are the nameless haunted yearnings in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Francesca Brittan describes *Sehnsucht*, "the desire for an unattainable perfection" (6) which affect the nineteenth century composer. Kreisler expounded the term "dissonance" (6) to express the artists' unworldly attitude. Music becomes the non-verbal avenue for expressing anger. This is followed by "Love" where Roskams weighs the composer's capacity to love with his capacity to voice his deepest feelings through music. Berlioz's Adolphe, suffers from "rage for loving" with the painful realization of his lover's philistinism towards music, he is torn between his love for his beloved and love for music. Shaw's Owen Jack affronts "violent love" (10) when he is rejected by his lover. His "ardent temper" (10) makes him denounce the worldly love and seek freedom, whereas Hoffmann's composer needs love, and his anger is projected towards music, when he throws away his guitar. In "Philistinism" the composer's anger breeds from the lack of recognition by his audience and the institutions. The adverse effects of commercialism resulted in the decline of quality which enraged the artist. In "Social status" the artist is castigated with "admirable cynicism hurled at the face" (15), as he combats the servitude and yearns for his artistic freedom. *Angry Servants, Anxious Masters in Colonial India* reflects upon anger arising from the marginalized section of society, when the oppressed raises their voice against the oppressor. The most astounding reality of the essay is the fact that anger as an emotion is devoid of class, caste and societal position; it finds its way to the individual and can be differentiated through its

medium of projection. For the servants of colonial India, it is through dissent and resistance. In British India the number of servants mirrored the societal status of the colonial masters, hence servants flocked the British household, which directly gave them the power in the inner domain. In order to control their servants and maintain their own racial supremacy, the British resorted to rough handling of their servants by means of flogging, thrashing and hurling shoes at them. At times the so called “thora dook dena” (76) or little torture led to death of the servants. The domestic servants often raised their voice, by filling cases and organizing strikes, such as the strike organized by the punkah-pullers in 1898, and strike organized by the barbers of Bombay in 1878 which got reported in the *Anglo Indian Guardian* (78). Such instances show that anger became a source of retaliation for the servants. The servants showed their dissent by leaving their jobs, the high caste servants often refused to work as cooks in the British households. Desertion of the domestic households amidst the revolt was seen as a mark of dissent. The servants often became a source of threat for the colonizers as they held the power of the inner sphere, and they returned the scornful gaze towards the colonizer.

Moving on to Swinburne, the author, Hemant Kumar Golapalli, focuses on Swinburne’s connection to the Italian revolution and its profound impact on his writings which showcases the element of anger. His anger is directed towards the political figure of Napoleon III. Swinburne sympathizes with Mazzini and Victor Hugo. Besides political anger the author classifies two sub-species of anger in Swinburne’s works mainly his righteous indignation and his institutional collective anger (121). The Aristotelian definition of popular anger deals with the pent-up hatred and is “more conducive to action” (122). It restrains reflection. Swinburne’s impersonal anger is a direct response to pain and incorporates reflection. The author further substantiates Swinburne’s anger through selections from *Songs before Sunrise* namely, “Dedication: To Mazzini” and “The Watch in the Night”, and a sonnet from “Dirae” namely “Apologia”. In “Dedication to Mazzini” Jerome J. McGann states that “despite his political passions Swinburne is not a revolutionary” (128), Julia Saville claims that Swinburne’s primary concern was to “expand the imaginative scope of public to appreciate the complexities of responsible political action” (128). The author further adds up by claiming that impersonal anger is the indignation of the poet; it lacks purely political context and the immediacy of passionate anger; however in “Apologia” the poet rejects even-tempered anger and calls for active participation from the citizens.

In his concluding essay, entitled *Re-forming Anger*, Hore, at the very beginning, distinguishes between instinctive anger and creative anger, with reference to E.T.A Hoffman’s short story *Mademoiselle de Scuderi* where Olivier’s anger is prototypical of the instinctive anger and Mademoiselle’s anger is symbolic of the creative anger. The author points out Senecan proclivity towards dignified anger, the “lions roar” (169) with the example of animal motifs. However, Seneca forbids the physiological manifestation of anger, whereas Plutarch focuses on practical wisdom, segregating anger from one’s self so that the person can perform their practical chores, as the pretension of anger reduces the vitality of anger. In the second part the author focuses on Bharata Muni’s *Natyashastra*, Krodha rasa, and its distinctive approach to anger. Anger becomes the metaphysical instinct, which has a life of its own. The author further dissects Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy*, claiming it as “angry text” (177) showcasing the conflict between Hellenism and Hebraism, the author introduces Arnold’s idea of power as a synthetic concept, but Arnold’s contradiction is soon unraveled in *The Popular Education of France* (1861) where he talks about the alliance (synthesis) of character and culture forming a successful individual. The author questions this dichotomy, before moving on to the Longinian Arnold who opines that “best law is not the most synthetic, but the most figurative than the rest” (179). In *Empedocles on Etna* (1852) the author shows the “strife” between the “instinctive and controlled” (180) responses for the concurrence of power. The last section deals with Arnold’s sonnet “Youth’s Agitations”, which brings into play the concept of “negative synthesis” (182) where agitations dissolve and the only thread of familiarity is found in discontent, and lack of creativity. Hore concludes by conferring a psychoanalytic scrutiny of “Sublime agitations” (182), where ‘youthful’ is the mutable id, ‘youth’ becomes the balancing ego, and ‘youthfulness’ the Hebraic superego.

The common term throughout the book and this review, resurfacing in the reader’s mind is ‘anger’; it has been assessed through different topics, from Tennyson to Arnold this long

journey unravels the latent aspects of anger, making it diverse in itself. In the above mentioned chapters, anger has traversed, from a jilted lover's exasperation to a quest for individuality moving on to the voice of the suppressed to a poet's political anger. Anger, when voiced in a proper manner becomes effective. While it might be an artist's or the marginalized servant's, anger yields its results. Creative anger proves to be fructifying for the artist whereas the anguished citizen takes resort to Aristotelian 'popular anger'. The book itself is a testimony of the fact that anger cannot be dismissed as mere emotion, when it reflects a huge spectrum of feelings. *Anger in the Long Nineteenth Century* will soon be published in paperback, as the critical response has been held to be satisfactory.

Bio-note

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